How I Make a Full Time Living as a Freelance Writer & How You Can, Too

Since I started freelance writing – nearly four years ago now – people have been intrigued by my job.

“So what is it that you do?”
“Do you actually get paid for that?”
“How do you find work?”

I hear these questions frequently from potential freelancers, incredulous 9-to-5er’s, and concerned friends and family members.

Whether you’re in the first camp and are looking to start your own freelance writing business, or you’re in the second group and think it’s impossible to make a living on your own, I’d like to answer these questions by getting into the nitty-gritty about how I’m making it as a freelance writer.

What is it That You Do?

At the most basic level, what I do is write. All the time.

But that’s not all I do as a freelance writer. I also spend time looking for jobs, marketing my services, talking with clients, conducting interviews, reading good stuff from other writers, and trying not to get distracted by Facebook.

So let’s break down all those tasks to give you a better picture of what my job as a freelance writer looks like:

Writing

Obviously, the core of my job is writing. In fact, when I started out, which we’ll talk about again in a minute, I was writing upward of 15,000 words a day, several days a week. And that was in addition to the writing I was doing to finish college.

That volume of writing isn’t sustainable for a long period, obviously. 15,000 words a day will squeeze your brain dry and make your fingers ache. Trust me.

But because I was making so little per word at the beginning of my career, that’s what I needed to do to pay the bills.

Now that I’m commanding higher rates, I don’t write nearly that volume in one day. I’m more likely to write a couple thousand words a day now, which is much more sustainable.

Even 2,000-3,000 words a day can be quite a lot, though, so I’ve had to learn to discipline myself to keep writing, even when I don’t really feel like it. I mean, people with 9-to-5 jobs have to work even when they don’t feel like it, right?

Another skill that has served me well as a freelancer is the ability to write it right the first time. I’m not saying I never edit my work, but I’ve developed a knack for at least structuring an article well right out of the gate. This saves time on the back end and allows me to take on more work than I would otherwise be able to do.

Looking for Jobs

The Web hosts about a zillion places to look for freelance writing jobs. The problem is that 99 percent of them suck.

I started my writing career by finding jobs on Elance. And the truth is that I’m grateful for Elance. Without it, I never would have found those first gigs that built my confidence and portfolio, and helped me learn the ropes of freelance writing for the Web.
However, let it be known that Elance and sites like it generally represent jobs that are the low hanging fruit of freelance writing (and, I’ve heard, other freelance specialties).

Many of the potential clients on sites like these are looking for a few quick SEO articles or a slap-bang ebook or two. Because they’re not looking for high-quality stuff, or because they don’t have a clue what real freelancers need to be paid, they offer rock-bottom prices.

Think a penny a word. Which sounds great if you can pound out 20,000 words in a day, but is truly bottom-of-the-barrel pay.

Now, you can find decent jobs on sites such as Elance and People Per Hour. In fact, some highly paid freelancers find all their work there. But you have to know which jobs to look for and how to negotiate if you want to earn decent rates.

Now, I mostly use other sites to find job listings, often from businesses and professional bloggers looking to pay good rates for excellent work. Here are some of the places I’ve found job listings or gotten gigs in more recent months:

- **The ProBlogger Job Board** - This is where I found my job as Dough Roller’s lead writer.
- **LinkedIn** - Some companies advertise for freelancers here. Some freelance writers also check out full-time job listings, offering their freelance services as a stop-gap until the company fills the full-time position.
- **Freelance Writing Jobs Yahoo! Group** – This Yahoo! group sends out a newsletter each week that is packed with interesting job listings. Many are taken from Craigslist ads in larger cities, but the listings are compiled from around the Web.
- **Journalism Jobs** – This site is focused, as you might guess, more on journalism than Web writing. I’ve never used it, but writer friends say it is a valuable resource.
- **Flex Jobs** – This site offers a huge variety of online, flexible and part-time jobs, including plenty of freelance writing positions.
- **Media Bistro** – The job listings section of Media Bistro lists jobs in all sorts of media-related areas. While many of the jobs are full-time, you’ll find the occasional freelance gig and can always offer freelance services to a company in the process of hiring a full-time writer.

**Marketing My Services**

Another way I find jobs is to market my services. Marketing is different from job hunting, because with marketing, I’m getting my business in front of people who may not be looking for a freelance writer.

To be honest, I’m relatively new to this active marketing thing. It’s more difficult and involved than applying for jobs that are already listed. But it’s also the best way to get high-paying clients.

So far, I’ve landed one bigger client through the most basic form of marketing – word of mouth. I simply started talking to people about what I do and what types of services I offer. Those people included my chiropractor, who has needed website help for a while.

Now, I work on a monthly basis running my chiropractor’s blog and website. That gig has led to a couple of other local work possibilities, though nothing has panned out yet.

As far as marketing my business and blog writing services, I’m preparing a mailing to send out near the end of the year, which will hopefully bring in some clients. And I’m also working on learning to leverage my website and use LinkedIn and Twitter to find new clients.

**Marketing Journalism**

I don’t just write for blogs, websites and businesses. I’m also a journalist, and marketing myself as a journalist is a whole other ballgame. For this, I do the traditional journalist thing – send query letters and letters of introduction.

I’ve had some success marketing myself as a journalist, and I try to make at least a few potential journalism contacts each month. Journalism jobs tend to pay well, $.30 or more a word once you break into a decent regional or trade magazine, and add a different dimension to my writing options.

If your goal is to become a freelance journalist, you must, must, must subscribe to *Writer’s Market*. I first encountered *Writer’s Market* in a college class in which we used the annually updated tomes at the library to find potential markets for our work.
Now, I don’t bother buying the updated version of *Writer’s Market*. I subscribe online.

The website is full of information for fledgling and experienced writers, and you can use it to search thousands of consumer and trade magazines. *Writer’s Market* is where I found information on the magazines I’ve been published in so far.

It also offers an annual price guide for writers, which breaks down writing gigs by type — it gets very detailed — and gives the low, high and average hourly and/or per project rate for different gigs. This is an indispensable tool if you’re
Typical Writing and Translation job listings on Elance. Note that many are offering $50 or less for a significant amount of writing.

I’m still learning more about marketing with LinkedIn, but proper keywords definitely help maximize your profile’s effectiveness.

I’m not sure how to price your work in any area of writing.

I’ve gotten all my journalism jobs by using a hybrid query letter/letter of introduction. To learn more about this particular marketing option, check out this article from The Renegade Writer blog. Actually, just go buy the book, *The Renegade Writer*, which taught me everything I know about getting journalism assignments.

Lots of writers say, and I’ve found it’s true, that once you’ve been hired by an editor, it becomes ever-easier to land more assignments with that editor or publication. I’ve written four articles in the past six months for *Bowling Center Management Magazine*. (And, no, I don’t know anything about bowling.)

As with web writing, you may need to spend time building up work examples to get better journalism jobs. I wrote several lower-paying articles ($.10/word) for a local parenting magazine before I broke into better-paying trade magazine jobs.

**Talking with Clients/Conducting Interviews**

While I don’t spend a ton of time talking with clients or conducting interviews, unless I’m working on a last-minute journalism piece, this does usually make up part of my week.

Most of the time, I talk to clients through Skype. I highly recommend that you get a free Skype account as a freelancer because it’s an easy, cheap way to talk with clients. While I typically prefer email, because, go figure, I communicate best in writing, sometimes it’s just simpler to talk things out over Skype.
For interviews, I usually use my phone because my Skype account isn’t set up to call out. For a while, I was maintaining a separate business line apart from my personal Smartphone. I know some writers prefer to have a separate line so they can screen calls or turn off their personal phones during work hours.

For me, instead of making my life easier, the extra phone made things more complicated. I’d forget to turn it on after the weekend, or wind up using my personal phone for calls anyway.

Now, I’ve changed my personal voicemail to a more professional option and simply screen calls. No one has ever expressed a problem with this.

**Reading Other Writers**

Chances are that if you enjoy writing, you also enjoy reading. But as a professional writer, you have to read. It’s just part of your job description. Writers read to improve their writing and to generate ideas for blog posts and article pitches. It’s indispensable.

I also spend lots of time reading blogs by writers on writing. Some of these blogs are great for learning new techniques, especially when it comes to writing for the Web. Others are excellent for learning how to market better and generally become more successful as a professional freelancer.

Below are links to some of my favorite writing and marketing blogs, along with some I need to catch up on, that might help you get started on your freelancing career:

- **The Renegade Writer** - Journalism-focused blog that offers excellent info on getting started, writing queries, productivity and more.
- **Make a Living Writing** - Run by a writer who works in journalism, copywriting, Web writing, and just about everything else. This blog covers it all.
- **Jeff Goins** - Jeff Goins recently signed his second book deal because of his platform-building blog, and his inspirational posts are worth a read.
Dealing with Distractions

When you work from home and/or the library and/or Starbucks, distraction can be a constant battle. For me, it’s the laundry that needs to be done, the dishes that need to be washed, and the Facebook feed that perpetually needs to be checked.

Your distractions may differ, but you’ll definitely have them. So learning to deal with distractions is key to being successful as a freelancer.

While not all freelancers deal with distraction in the same way, here are some of the tips and tools that work for me and for other freelancers I know:

- Create a work space. A home office is a tax write-off, which is great. But if you can’t have an office, at least set aside a space conducive to work – and preferably not near your biggest at-home distractions.
- Use Freedom or Anti-Social. Freedom is an excellent app that disables the Internet on your computer for up to eight hours at a time. Anti-Social (only available for Mac at this time) blocks the social media sites that tend to be most distracting. There are plenty of other great anti-distraction apps to be had for all platforms, including Web browser plugins.
- Set a timer. One of my favorite tricks is to set a timer for 30-60 minutes. During that time, I do nothing but work. When the timer goes off, I have to get up and move around. Oftentimes, I’ll pick a small chore to get done. That way, I accomplish non-work items on my to-do list, without interrupting too much work time.

You Actually Get Paid for That?

The short answer is, yes. And I’ve made more money each year since I started in 2008.

At first, freelancing was supplemental income while I worked part-time at the YMCA and went to school. Then, I was just freelancing and going to school. Then, I found out I was pregnant with my daughter and didn’t want to work a regular not-mom-friendly job, so I hit the freelancing full time.

I know, you’re probably sitting there thinking, “Yeah, but how much do you get paid?”

Isn’t that really the bottom line for most of us?

Well, I’m not going to lay out this year’s profit-loss statement for you, but I will give you a ballpark idea of how much I earn as a freelancer and how that has changed over the years.

Starting Out

As a newbie to freelancing, I had no idea what I was doing. I didn’t know what writers made, and I sure didn’t know how to bid for decent pay on Elance, the only place I knew to find work at the time.

So when I started, I was working for $.01 a word.

At first, that seemed great. I mean, it was money. The writing wasn’t hard, and I could sometimes pull in a couple hundred bucks for a (very long) day’s work.
I worked at that rate for more than a year, until one of my first ongoing clients agreed to bump me up to $.02 a word. I was really moving on up!

These are very typical rates for jobs like the ones you’ll find on Elance. With these, you’re basically writing for bit-rate blogs and content mills, not helpful places to build your portfolio, or to be paid what you’re really worth.

But I didn’t know other options existed until well into my freelancing career, when I finally discovered several other types of writing, including journalism, copywriting and professional blogging.

If you’re just starting out as a writer, let me give you this piece of advice: Don’t work for $.01 a word!

Yes, new writers may need to take time to build a portfolio before landing truly high-paying jobs. But writing junk for pennies won’t build your portfolio, make you a better writer, or advance your career.

Frankly, it’s better to volunteer to do some good writing for an organization you believe in than it is to write for peanuts and get stuck in this years-long cycle of getting paid less than what you’re worth. Trust me on this one.

Moving Up

Once I figured out that I wasn’t making nearly enough for my writing, I started moving up my prices. I had to drop some of my lowest-paying clients, while others agreed to increase my rates. Still, I was making around $.05 a word, but that was five times better than my starting rates.

While some changes took place gradually, others happened overnight. Once I knew what my writing was worth, I took the plunge and started asking for higher rates all around.

One new client who needed website content and blog posts started me at $25 per post and eventually my going rate for a 500-1,000 word blog post settled around $50-$75. This is still much less than many high-profile professional bloggers earn.

In the journalism niche, I started out pretty low, making $.10 a word from a local parenting magazine to build up some clips. But I’d only written two articles for the parenting magazine before I broke into a trade magazine that pays $.30 a word (and hands me all my contacts for each article, to boot).

Again, those are on the lower end of the spectrum. Many trade magazines pay $.50 a word and more, and “glossies,” consumer magazines like the ones at the grocery store, may pay upward of $1 a word.

Because my writing income comes from a variety of sources, it’s best to look at the change in my estimated hourly rate.

It’s always a good idea to track your hourly rate as a freelancer. It’s what lets you know whether a job is worth your while. A flat rate of $1,000 might sound great, until you figure out it’s going to take you 100 hours to finish the job.

When I first started freelancing, I was making $10-$20 per billable hour. This may sound like a lot (it did to me at the time because I was making less than $10 an hour at the Y), but because some working hours aren’t billable, it doesn’t come out to much. Plus, remember that as a freelancer you have to take your own expenses, including income and self-employment taxes, out of your rate.

Now, I rarely take on a job where I’ll make less than $40 per hour.

Keep in mind that these are all ballpark figures, and they all apply specifically to me. Many part-time freelancers are happy to pick up $10-$15 an hour. And many full-time freelancers – especially those with experience or in a high-pay niche – make at least $100 per hour.

One of the best ways to figure out what your hourly rate goal should be is to use FreelanceSwitch’s Hourly Rate Calculator. It lets you include all your business and personal expenses, your expected working hours, and more to ensure you set your hourly rate high enough.

While you may not start out at your hourly rate goal, this is what you should be working toward as a freelancer. And as long as you’re being reasonable with your expenses and billable hours, this is likely a very reasonable goal, too.

How Do You Find Work?
Oddly enough, this is a question I’m asked less often, but it’s the one that most of my day revolves around. There’s plenty of work to be had for freelancers of all sorts. But that doesn’t mean finding that work is simple.

In fact, most freelancers I talk to spend a significant portion of their work time hustling to get more work. While your writing-to-hustling ratios may vary, depending on your freelancing season, expect to spend the majority of your freelancing time marketing when you start out.

And if you ever reach the point where work is coming in steadily, don’t stop marketing. It may seem silly, but freelance writing is a boom-or-bust business. Writers who ride on the boom, assuming they can quit marketing, find that their next bust hits particularly hard.

There are tons of ways to market yourself as a freelancer. Here, I’ll talk about the most important marketing options that I use, or have used. The writing blogs I mentioned above will help you learn more about marketing yourself as a writer.

Elance

Even though I rarely use Elance to find work anymore, it’s not a terrible place to begin - if you start out bidding the right price for the right jobs. Getting started on Elance is simple, and you can use it to quickly build up a few clips (if you’re bidding on good jobs) and some client feedback that can take you further. Here’s how to start on Elance:

1. Set up a profile. Make your profile as complete as you can. Ask for recommendations from people you’ve worked for or college professors. My profile started out with mostly college work in my portfolio, which was enough to land those first few Elance clients.

2. Find and Bid on Jobs. Remember, you want to be picky about the jobs you bid on, but you will probably need to bid on lots of jobs before you land one. I’m not sure how many jobs I bid on before I got that first one, and then how many more I bid on before finding steady work. It was a lot.

With Elance, you have to pay for the connects you need to bid on a job. These are basically points that you spend to bid on each job. You can buy more connects with your membership, depending on your goals.

It’s up to you to decide how many connects you ought to pay for to get started. That all depends on your freelancing goals and how quickly you think you can find work. It’ll be quicker if you have a demonstrable specialty, such as a doctor wanting to write medical articles, or if you have a writing background.

Your goal here is not to get just any job. Your goal should be to get that first job with a good client who will help you move your career forward. To meet this standard, you’ll need to find a job offering decent pay, and one that has a very good job description. Vague descriptions often mean the client’s expectations will change on a whim, and you really can’t work like that.

Bidding on jobs is pretty straightforward. Each job will require a certain number of connects to bid on it, depending on the overall price of the job. The higher priced the job, the more connects you’ll have to spend to bid on it. Don’t be afraid to use those connects liberally as you get started.

The best bids are very detailed, give plenty of background on the writer, and answer any and all questions, stated or implied, that the job poster might have. Here’s one example of a bid that won me a job:

**The Job Description:**

```
Hello Elance Writers

Below are details of my project.

A weight loss e-book consisting of four sections. Total words around 35,000 plus an introduction and conclusion. Each Part will have various chapters.

The writing style is to be friendly, educational and humorous (where applicable). Some sections will require substantiated research and some scientific data where applicable.

The book will cover various topics some of which are listed below:
• Your metabolism and hypothalamus (how they work and what stops them from functioning correctly)
```
Abby Hayes
Excellent Writing for All Your Projects

Overview
Minimum Hourly Rate $49

"Abby is a great writer! I've used many writers before and none have been able to create the kind of authority she creates in her articles. I got much more than I had hoped for. I will definitely use again. Thanks!"

Specializing in conversational articles, well-researched health and finance non-fiction, ebooks, and SEO work.

Read More »

Job History

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<td>5.0</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

View All »

Portfolio

Religion in 20th Century American Literature
Original academic essay with MLA formatting.

Skills (6)

- English
  - Tested: TOP 8%
- English Grammar
  - Tested: TOP 10%
- English Spelling
  - Tested: TOP 20%
- Editing
  - Tested: TOP 20%
- English Punctuation
  - Tested: TOP 20%
- Business Writing
  - Tested: 0%
This is my current Elance profile, which has evolved quite a bit since I started four years ago.

- Hormones – how they affect your weight including how chemicals in foods affect them eg: how food chemicals effect your Leptin etc
- Addictions – eg Sugar – how and why?
- Weight loss myths
- Emotional eating
- Chemicals in foods and your neuro transmitters
- The food industry
- The diet industry
- Yo-Yo dieting etc
- Body clock

Once the successful person is chosen I will provide you with an in-depth chapter by chapter scope. Please include edits and revisions to final draft prior to payment.

Kind regards
My Proposal:

As a freelancer with over two years of experience and a health nut in my personal life, I'm the perfect writer for your weight loss ebook. I excel at researching peer-reviewed scientific articles and distilling the information they impart into plain language that the average reader can grasp and put to use. My ability to do this type of research will set your ebook apart, giving it more authority and reliability.

Attached, you'll find samples of my health-related work to give you an idea of my style and abilities. If you need more samples or have questions, feel free to ask.

For this project, I would charge a flat fee of $XXX*, plus the Elance fee. I could have the entire ebook completed within three weeks of acceptance.

* The proposed amount was near the top of the client's price range. I included several work samples as attachments to showcase my ebook and health writing, in particular.

4. Do Excellent Work, on Time. Turning in work on time is paramount for most Elance projects, as clients here tend to be on a tight schedule. If you think you’ll have trouble turning in work on time, talk to your client well ahead of your deadline.

One key to meeting a deadline is giving yourself enough time when bidding on the project. You always have the opportunity to tell a client in your proposal how long you think a project will take. When in doubt, add an extra few days or a week.

This is especially true if you’re putting in lots of proposals at once, because you never know when you’ll get a flood of accepted proposals. When it rains, it pours!

As long as you do the work as promised and to expectations, you should have no problem getting excellent feedback on Elance. This feedback can help you get more jobs here and can move your career forward elsewhere, especially if clients will give you feedback on LinkedIn or for your personal website.

Job Boards

Using job boards to find new freelancing gigs is similar to using Elance. It’s just that there aren’t any connects involved, and you don’t get a profile to showcase your talents. But job boards like the one at ProBlogger do tend to have better-paying clients.

The keys to using a job board are to read the job description in full and to send as detailed an email as possible. You don’t want to make the email too long to read comfortably. But you do want to be sure you hit on everything the job listing is asking for. You’ll also want to include samples or links to samples.

Again, you’ll likely wind up inquiring about lots and lots of jobs before you land one. I sent probably 10-15 emails to ProBlogger job
This could be a decent option, especially if you have a legal background. The description isn’t long, but it’s enough to let you know about what is expected of you.

listings before I landed a two-article assignment with Rob here at Dough Roller. Here’s the email I sent Rob that got me hired:

As a freelance writer, I’ve written on every topic you can imagine. But personal finance is among my top five favorite subjects. I love giving readers practical information they can use to improve their financial lives – whether the advice is on saving money, spending wisely, or buying the right kind of insurance. My writing is personable and down-to-earth, and I focus on truly useful hints and tips.

Attached, please find two writing samples. You’ll find a third here: http://www.creditdonkey.com/extreme-coupon.html. You’ll also find my resume attached.

I could write up to 20 articles per week, depending on the length of the articles and whether or not interviews would be required. My rate would be $XX per post, or more for posts involving a phone or Skype interview.

If you have more questions or need more information, please let me know. I look forward to hearing from you!

Because I was able to provide samples of financial writing, in particular, I heard back from Rob pretty quickly, and the rest is history.

Don’t worry if you don’t have samples in a particular field that you’d like to write about. It may take you longer to find clients, but any writing samples that show you know how to string a sentence together can help you land a job.

Query Letters

If you’re interested in jobs in journalism, query letters are how you get started. Again, I highly recommend The Renegade Writer book to learn more about the craft of writing query letters. The companion book, Query Letters that Rock, is another good option to check out.

If you’re interested in consumer writing, such as for parenting magazines, women’s magazines, and other popular newsstand magazines, you’ll definitely have to get the hang of writing complete queries. These emails typically give a detailed outline of a potential article, including some preliminary research.

If, like me, you’re interested in writing for trade magazines, which tend to be easier to work with and have several other benefits, the query letter/letter of introduction hybrid is a better bet.

Since trade magazines are very niche-specific — there are trade magazines for spring manufacturers, sheep farmers, and archery dealers — they’re not necessarily looking for writers to pitch them article ideas. Instead, they assign articles from their editorial calendar to writers who prove they can get the interview and write a great, engaging piece.

While this isn’t always true and some trade magazines look for complete queries, I succeeded in breaking into a bowling-related magazine
with a letter of introduction. I would have had no idea how to pitch a complete article for the magazine, because I don’t know a thing about bowling. The editor didn’t need a bowler, he needed a writer who could operate on a tight deadline – me.

This introductory email landed me my first assignment with this editor, and he’s been tossing them my way since:

Dear (Editor),

Hi! I’ve enjoyed checking out Bowling Center Management Magazine’s latest issue this afternoon. I particularly enjoyed the article on historic issues with minimum wage hikes.

Do you assign articles to freelance writers? I’m a freelancer in Indianapolis who has published articles with IUPUI Advances and Indy’s Child Magazine. I’ve also done ghost blog writing and copywriting for numerous clients in various industries – from personal finance to health to moving and storage.

I’m an excellent, thorough researcher, and I offer quick turnaround times and a professional touch.

May I send you some clips?

Getting my first trade magazine assignment was as easy as that. Yes, I had to send out 30-40 emails (very similar looking emails) before I got that assignment, but the high pay and relatively easy work has made it worth my while.

Other Marketing Options

I’m relatively new to other marketing options for writers, so I can only give you a basic overview here. But the writers’ blogs mentioned above are chock-full of information on various types of marketing, including LinkedIn, Twitter and using your own website. Here’s what I do know about marketing yourself as a freelancer:

- **Your website:** I do have a [writer’s website](http://www.printfriendly.com/print/?source=site&url=http://www.printfriendly.com), though it’s still in the works. Many writers, especially those in very specific specialty niches, get job offers from their websites. But a lot of more generalized writers, such as myself, have trouble ranking high enough on Google to get inbound writing offers. Still, a neat, clean website is a good way to outline your accomplishments and post your clips.

- **LinkedIn:** I’ve recently gotten a couple of inquiries through LinkedIn. With LinkedIn, it’s all about having a complete profile, uploading or linking to clips, and updating your feed once or twice a week. It’s not hard to do, so I’d recommend getting on LinkedIn.

- **Cold Calls:** If you want to break into business writing, cold calls are a surefire way to get your first few clients. It’s a little scary, especially if you’re an introvert. But it’s also just a numbers game. Make a few thousand (yes, thousand) cold calls, and you’ll certainly get a handful of clients. As long as you direct your cold calls to the right types of businesses, you’ll likely land good, high-paying clients who will really help move your career forward. I learned most of what I know about cold calls from [The Well Fed Writer](http://www.printfriendly.com/print/?source=site&url=http://www.printfriendly.com), an excellent book for starting out as a freelance business writer.

- **Long-Form Mailing:** Again, this is one way that business writers find work. Surprisingly enough, traditional snail mail works well in a world where we’re inundated with emails every day. I’m learning how to put together a mailing campaign from copywriter’s coach Chris Marlow. She offers some excellent step-by-step classes on landing the best-paying copywriting jobs with her marketing method.

How Can I Get Started?

Surprisingly, this isn’t a question I’m asked often. I think many people are more interested in keeping their day jobs, which I can understand with benefits and all, but some people just don’t think they could possibly become a freelance writer.

The truth is, if you’re a decent writer, are willing to continually improve your writing, and have the right resources, you can start working as a freelance writer.

I wouldn’t necessarily recommend that you quit your day job right this second, but you can easily start freelancing on the side, or even start
Getting started as a freelancer depends on the type of freelancing you want to do. Since I’ve dabbled in several types, I’ll list the best starting resources I know of for different types of freelance writing:

- **Journalism:** Hands down, the best get-started-as-a-journalist book is *The Renegade Writer*. It’s a fabulous guide on how to break into journalism. The Renegade Writer blog by one of the book’s authors is another must-read for those interested in starting out in journalism.

- **Web Writing:** This is a big category, and there’s no overarching book I can think of to get you started. But I would definitely start reading *Make a Living Writing*, *Leaving Work Behind*, and *Be a Freelance Blogger* if you’re interested in writing for the Web.

- **Copywriting:** Copywriting is the writer’s term for business writing. It encompasses everything from writing traditional long-copy mailers to writing catalog descriptions to writing blogs for businesses. *The Well Fed Writer* is probably the best get-started book in this category.

- **Blogging:** If you’re interested in making money through your own blog, resources abound. The ProBlogger blog and book are great starting resources, but Copyblogger and *Make a Living Writing* are valuable resources in this category, too.

Any other questions about what it takes to be a freelancer, or how you can get started? Feel free to ask in the comment section below.